

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

081632Z Sep 05

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 005248

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EUR/SE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/08/2015

TAGS: MARR PGOV PREL PARM PINR TU

SUBJECT: NEW TGS J-5 STRATEGY DIVISION CHIEF READY TO ENGAGE

REF: ANKARA 4862

Classified By: Political-Military Counselor Timothy A. Betts, reasons 1
.4 (b) and (d).

¶11. (U) This is an action request. Please see para. 7.

¶12. (C) SUMMARY: During a Sept. 8 introductory call by PolMilCouns and Deputy PolMilCouns, new TGS J-5 Strategy Division Chief MG Savas confirmed TGS interest in holding Caucasus Working Group and HLDG meetings this fall. Savas listed his priorities for the Strategy Division as NATO cooperation, Force Planning and strengthening mil-mil relations with Turkey's neighbors and strategic partners. TGS is continuing its discussions with the French MOD the operational modalities of a proposed joint Turkey/France command of the ISAF Central Region. Savas noted TGS dismay that a misunderstood line about Turkish-Iranian relations contained in a briefing provided to an ATC-sponsored STAFFDEL had found its way into the Turkish press the next day. During the same meeting, MG Erinmezler, TGS J-5 Security Division Chief, outlined Turkey's preparation for its 2006 PSI exercise and noted that the US had not confirmed its participation. PolMilCouns expressed USG appreciation for Turkey's efforts to develop a comprehensive PSI exercise, and confirmed that the US would participate. END SUMMARY.

¶13. (C) Major General (MG) Serdar Savas was promoted during the August 2005 Supreme Military Council and reassigned from the Turkish Land Forces Command, where he served as Policy Planning Chief (reftel). He does not appear to share the easy confidence and excellent English-language skills of his predecessor MG Cengiz Arslan, but seems comfortable in the headquarters environment and well-briefed on his portfolio. Savas previously worked in TGS several times, including as a Project Officer in the J-5 Strategy Division. He is familiar with the US, having spent a year at the US Army War College and as a participant in a subsequent NATO officers tour of the US. Also participating in this meeting was BG Tuncer Erinmezler, who succeeded Brigadier General Haldun Solmazturk as TGS J-5 Disarmament and Security Affairs Division Chief; he arrived from the 3rd Army Command in Erzincan, where he served as Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations.

¶14. (C) Savas characterized his policy priorities as NATO participation, military force planning in accord with NATO recommendations and the changing security environment, and development of Turkey's relations with its neighbors and strategic partners. In response to PolMilCouns comments on US concerns with several of Turkey's neighbors, particularly Iran's nuclear program, Savas said TGS was surprised to read in the press on Aug. 24, points on Iran it presented at an Aug. 23 briefing to an American-Turkish Council (ATC)-sponsored STAFFDEL. He defended the briefing point, which stated that TGS is "cautiously optimistic" about the positive trend in Turkey's relations with Iran. According to Savas, Turkey is not trying to improve its relations with Iran. Rather, Iran is working to improve its relations with Turkey. PolMilCouns underscored that no Embassy official commented publicly on the TGS briefing, and reminded Savas that the briefing was unclassified and the STAFFDEL had included private sector representatives from the ATC and defense industries. He suggested that both sides might remind the ATC that such briefings, while unclassified, are sensitive and should not be shared.

¶15. (C) Agreeing with PolMilCouns on the importance of holding a High Level Defense Group (HLDG) in 2005, Savas added that a Caucasus Working Group (CWG) meeting should be scheduled before then to allow the CWG meeting results to be incorporated into HLDG discussions. According to Savas, DCHOD Kosaner's schedule was fairly full for November. However, given US scheduling constraints for December, TGS will review the DCHOD's schedule for the Nov. 1-11 time frame suggested by OSD. (Note: The October 19-20 time frame also suggested by OSD falls during Ramazan. End Note.)

¶16. (C) TGS J-3 is engaged with the French military at the 06 level to discuss the modalities of a possible shared command of ISAF Central Region Command in Kabul during the second half of 2006, said Savas. Discussion topics include a possible rotation between Turkish and French Commanders and

Deputy Commanders. Savas expects the operational modalities to be discussed at the general officer level during the November NATO Military Committee meeting in Paris, and finalized by the December holidays.

17. (C) Erinmezler, whose office handles TGS participation in the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) asked whether the US planned to participate in the air, land and sea exercise Turkey would host in 2006. Turkey had not received an official US response. Turkey intends to incorporate lessons learned from recent exercises and add new elements to address training requirements identified by Turkey and other countries. According to Erinmezler, the general scenario has been defined and the details are being worked. Turkey will brief the scenario at the November regional experts meeting in Hamburg. PolMilCouns emphasized US enthusiasm for the comprehensive exercise Turkey was planning, which will add a greater level of complexity to previous exercises, and noted US appreciation for Turkey's organization and advance planning for this exercise. He believed that the US will participate in the 2006 exercise and promised to work for a formal response with some specificity on the parameters of US participation. Action Request: Post requests Washington provide us with a formal response to Turkey regarding US participation plans for the 2006 PSI exercise. End Action Request.

MCELDOWNEY